The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

Intelligence Community Staff

DCI/ICS 82-3103
2 February 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Members, DCID 1/2 Committee

FROM: Chairman, DCID 1/2 Committee

SUBJECT: Revising the DCID 1/2 Process

1. Over the past several months, we have been considering potential improvements in the DCID 1/2 process. In the same context, I believe we must also address the more fundamental question as to whether the current process remains entirely appropriate to the DCID 1/2 mission. In short, in addition to considering the need for procedural adjustment, we should also determine whether there is a requirement for more basic change.

2. On the latter score, I find two major aspects of our current modus operandi troubling. First, I believe much of the priority guidance we are generating is too detailed and finely tuned to be of use to Community planners and managers. Even with respect to the DCID-NSRL relationship, our most direct and clear cut, my understanding is that a single level priority change generally is not translatable into meaningful action in the real world of NSA operations. Yet, such changes constitute the vast majority of our actions.

3. I am concerned even more by what I think is insufficient emphasis on the "relativity" of priority assignments, i.e., the requirement that the priority assigned reflect not only the absolute importance of a requirement, but also where it stands relative to other requirements, should resources be insufficient to do everything. Intrinsically, the prime function of a priorities system is to establish relative importance. Yet, ours contains no built-in features to further that aim. It is true that a Priority 2 topic is relatively more important than a Priority 3 topic. However, the definitions of those priorities are stated in absolute rather than relative terms and, in my observation, are generally assigned on that basis. To the extent relative importance signifies, it is generally introduced on an ad hoc basis at the initiative of Committee members during our voting sessions. I think we need a more systematic reflection of this basic consideration, and believe its lack is a major contributant to our chronic difficulty in controlling priority escalation.

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5. The basic guidance outputs of a refocused DCID 1/2 process would be (a) the relative importance of one country to another as regards users' intelligence needs, and (b) the relative importance of the various intelligence topics as they pertain to each country. While this output is significantly narrower and less sophisticated than what the current system is capable of providing, I would suggest that it represents the effective limit of what Community planners and managers would find operationally useful
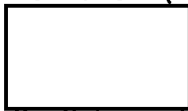
6. I request your comment and advice on the foregoing, which is intended as much to crystallize our continuing discussion of change as it is to put forward specific proposals. In particular, I would like you to address: (a) the extent to which you share a perception that we need to make significant changes in the current DCID 1/2 process; (b) the specific changes outlined above; and (c) any variations, alternatives, and/or additions to these proposals that you think might better serve. In addition, the appropriate Committee members should assess the impact that implementation of the changes in question would have on functions, publications, etc., that make derivative use of current DCID 1/2 procedures or outputs.

7. Please provide your responses to me by COB 23 February.

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